No. 30

# The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

*Price 10¢*

Neither of them had a thought of the danger which often lurks in this wilderness. But they were brought face to face with it in the most unexpected and the most dramatic manner.

R. of M. G., No. 30.

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AT THIS juncture Mr. Shields had paused to take a long breath. For some little time his abstracted gaze rested on the floor, then he quickly roused himself. There was a reminscent smile on his face as he went on:

"I had sense enough to realize that her confusion might be carried to resentment if I persisted, so I contented myself with refraining from further conversation, and rejoicing inwardly that I had learned a secret of which I had never dreamed.

"She was obviously concerned over my condition, and quickly leaving the subject of such sudden interest to me, she asked:

"'Are you feeling better?'

"It was a trite thing to ask, but I knew that it was her way out of the situation.

"'Yes,' I replied. 'I am weak and there is some little pain, but I am sure I shall improve right along from now on.'

"'I am so glad,' she said.

"'Will you answer one question?' I pleaded.

"'Yes.'

"'How long have I been here, and why should I be in your home?'

" 'That is two questions,' she smiled. 'But I will answer by saying that you have been here about three weeks now, and that you have been very ill, so that you could not be moved.'

"Then I made some other inquiries. I wanted to know about the sick man and she told me that he had died. When I asked about the man who shot me, she replied faintly:

"'My husband!'

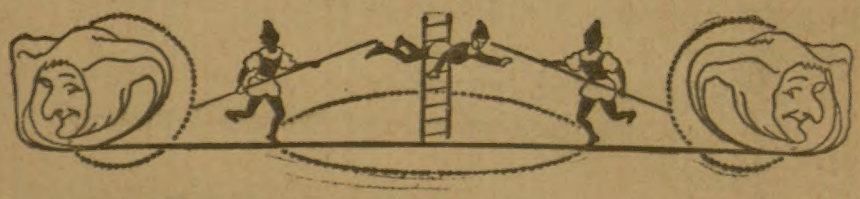
"'Your —— your husband?'

"'Yes!'

"For a moment I lay stunned.

"The thought that this lovely and tender woman was tied for life to such a man maddened me. I was in a rage. All my romance had been suddenly smashed to little fragments.

"A surly brute had come between me and the woman whom, at that moment, I loved more than I had ever loved anyone before."



## Chapter 96

## A ROMANTIC SEQUEL.

FOR THE second time Mr. Shields paused, but this time to master the emotion that swept over him. He seemed to be living again that dreadful scene. Marie knew what an effort it cost hom and her eyes rested on his convulsed face compassionately.

She was on the verge of asking him to go no further with the story, but before she could form the request the old lawyer was speaking again.

"My dear young woman," he said with a sigh that came from the bottom of his heart, "have you ever watched the sun go down in the tropics? One moment you are bathed in the light, and the next moment you are surrounded by an intense, impenetrable darkness. I experienced that feeling when the woman told me that she was married.

"I restrained myself with difficulty. I wanted to jump from the bed and go in search of the wrecker of my happiness. She saw, and I belive she understood. Her lips parted as though she would speak.

"Then she turned her head and went softly away from my bed and from the room.

"She left me hopeless, with only one desire in my heart and one thought in my mind.—— that the bullet which had found a lodging place in my body, might finally complete the work which her husband had hoped it would do.

"I did not want to get well again. What would my life be without this woman whom I had learned to love

so dearly.

"But in spite of my misery I began to improve. In fact, to my disgust, I was soon so much better that I could sit up.

"The woman waited on me quietly and silently. At times I caught a trace of wistfulness in her looks. It was hard to understand. However, we did not again refer to her husband.

"The doctor came less and less frequently, untill one day he declared that I needed his services no longer. That was good news.

"One day I was seated in a chair in my room. I felt physically as strong as I ever was. My mind was made up that I would tresspass no longer upon that woman's hospitality. Just as that thought was revolving in my mind, the door opened and she glided in.

"'Well I am going to leave you to-morrow,' I began abruptly.

"Her face paled.

"'Why?' she asked.

"'Because I have been here too long,' I said.

"'Why,' she asked again. 'Are you tired of staying here?' She laid a hand upon my head. 'Tell me, are you tired of staying here?'

"'No, not that,' I replied. 'I am tired of my enforceed inactivity. I am tired of being away from my work, and tired of making you wait on me.'

"She smiled wanly.

"Then I noticed that she looked thinner and that her eyes were less bright. The color had gone out of her cheeks and her young figure was bent.

"I cursed myself for having allowed her to tie herself to the heavy task of caring for me.

"'I should never have permitted it,' I began,but she broke in with:

"'It has been something of a pleasure to wait on you.' Her voice was very tired. 'You know, it was all my fault. You see, I did nothing more than discharge a duty.'

"'And you done it well,' I answered with all the bitterness I coud muster. 'Too well.'

"She looked at me questioningly.

"'Oh, I may as well be frank,' I went on brutally. 'I have had an experience here which I shall never forget. I shall go back to my law practise and struggle and fight for recognition. I —— I wish to God I had never met you, for you have taken all the heart out of my every future endeavor.'

"'Why, Mr. Shields!' she exclaimed. 'You don't mean that I ——'

"'I do mean it!' I interrupted half angrily, 'and I have only this to say: You offered me one thousand dollars for the service I was to render, which, by the way was not rendered. But if I had to do the thing over again and you were to offer me a hundred times that sum, poor as I am, I would not accept the offer. No, indeed, I wouldn't.'

"I —— I don't understand!' she faltered.

"'Yes, you do!' I cried. 'But for fear that there should be any doubt, I am going to tell you. I have lain on that cursed bed for weeks, conscious after the first few weeks, and in that time, you have ministered to me. I heard you say something that lifted me into the highest heaven of delight.

"'You inadvertantly told me something —— I —— did not expect, something which perhaps you did not mean. It was cruel. Oh, it was worse than cruel. I don't have to repeat what you said. No doubt you remember it well. But you created a hopeless feeling in my heart because —— because you have a husband.'

"Oh, it is that?' she said.

"'Yes, isn't that enough?' I demanded.

"'But I have no husband,' she said quietly.

"'You —— you have no husband?'

"'I have no husband,' she repeated.

"I stared at her like a madman.

"'Do you —— do you mean to stand there and tell me that you have no husband?' I shouted.

"'I have not, Mr. Shields!'

"'But the man who shot me?' I cried.

" 'He is dead,' came back in a whisper.

"And then as I looked at her in utter astonishment and too bewildered to speak, she went on rapidly:

"'The man who was my husband was James Martin. You may have heard of him. He was a nationally known counterfeiter and all around crook. I met him in New York while a student at Byrn Mar College. And I shall never forget the day.

"'He was so handsome and so attentive that I fell for his flattery and married him secretly. At the time I did not know what kind of a man he was. That I found out when it was too late.

"'By degrees I discovered the awful truth, and I threatened to divorce him. Then he swore he would kill me if I went through with the divorce. I was deathly afraid of him and so continued as his wife. When my poor father took ill he insisted that I ask him to make a will, leaving everything to me.

"'My husband was then living in Chicago under an assumed name and under cover. He suggested that we secure a lawyer who was little known, and who could be trusted to execute a will in secret.

"'Well, I came to your office that night, and the rest you know. But I must tell you something you perhaps never noticed.

"'When you dictated that will, my husband put his own name on the document instead of mine. If it had gone through, I would have been penniless and utterly at his mercy..

"'But you saved the situation by doing something that nearly cost you your life. You attempted to take the bandage from your eyes, and my husband shot you with murderous intent.

"'He fled instantly, believing that he had killed you. For three days I did not see him. And I was glad. Ah how I hated that scoundrel. The fourth day he came to my house, begging me to hide him. He had been caught in a raid, and the police were on his trail.

"'When I flatly refused to hide him in my house, he flew into a rage and almost choked me to death. But for the servants who rushed into the room in response to my cries for help, I would not be alive to-day.

"'They drove him from the house and that same night he was killed when he failed to obey the order to halt given by a policeman.

"'Oh, I forgot to mention that my father lived two more weeks after that night. And I am happy to say that he passed away without knowing the truth about the man I called husband.

"'So you see,' the woman ended, 'I am now all alone in the world. I have not a single living relative anywhere. I am lonesome —— very lonesome.'

"Well, to say that I was glad as the woman finished her story, would not half express it.

"For a long while I sat in a stupor. When I looked at her, I noticed that her eyes were filled with tears. She was about to break into sobbing.

"'Muriel,' I said, 'tell me one thing. Did you mean what you said that morning when you thought I was unconscious? You —— you prayed that my life might

be spared, and you ended with three words that have been ringing in my ears ever since.'

"She began to tremble and she blushed.

"'Well, you —— you see, 'she stammered in the most delightful confusion, 'I owed you so much. You practically freed me from a bond that had become a real torture to me. You can't begin to imagine what a frightful life I led as that man's wife.

"'When you deliberately gave him cause to shoot you, you prevented an amazing fraud. As I told you before, but for you, I would be a pauper to-day. Instead I am rich in this world's possession.'

" She dropped her eyes and would not look at me. There was a constant quivering of her lips.

"'You did not answer my question,' I cried as I struggled to my feet.

"'What question?' she demanded softly.

"'Do you love me?'

"No reply came.

"'Do you love me?' I repeated.

"'I —— I was so grateful for all you did for me,' she temporized. 'I owed you so much ——'

" 'Do you love me?' I demanded this time. 'I must know that first of all.'

'I watched her closely and saw that she began to sway toward me. When I opened my arms she slipped into them with a low sob.

"For a long while she lay on my breast in the most blissful silence. Then I raised her chin and asked her to kiss me. She did.

"After my first paroxysm of happiness was over, I drew her to seat. I told her all about myself. I frankly confessed that I was a poor beginner in the profession of law. I asked her if she would be willing to marry a poor man. To my utter surprise and pleasure she seem-

ed to take that for granted.

"'What good is wealth if it does not bring you the things you want most?' she said. 'If my money will help you in getting a foothold, you may have every dollar of it. I shall be glad to be poor for a change.'

"I confess that I felt like a fortune hunter. But my mind was made up to one thing —— not a single dollar of her money would I touch.

"Then followed several months of ardent courtship, and we were finally married. It was the happiest day of my whole life. Muriel insisted that we live in her big house. I vetoed the idea. After some good-natured argueing, we settled down in a modest flat.

"Never in all my life did I work harder. As luck would have it, my law practise increased, and I was able to support my lovely wife in comfort. I doubt very much if a happier couple ever lived.

"Muriel never liked the location of my law office. She used to tell me that I ought to be ashamed of the 'dump' as she called it.

"Without my knowledge she leased an office in one of the best buildings in Chicago, and furnished it lavishly. This she presented to me on my birthday. Ah, how I loved her for it.

"But it seemed that my good fortune and happiness were too good to last. My wife became the victim of a malady which necessitated a very expensive operation. This was followed by another.

"Her continued illness required the services of a specialist and two nurses. It was then that I realized the comfort of being wealthy.

"It was then that I realized the value of ready cash. I would never have been able to take proper care of my wife with my earings. It was her money which brought me the contentment that otherwise would have

been denied me.

"Well, there is nothing more to add," Mr. Shields concluded his lengthy narrative, "except that I am glad of the good fortune which came to you, Marie."

The latter leaned toward the old lawyer and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I agree fully with what your dear wife said when she stated that wealth is of no value unless it brings you happiness," she declared. "Unless I shall be able to put my unexpected riches to some good use, I don't know but that I would rather not have it at all."

Mr. Shields wagged his head.

"My dear young woman, the time will come when you will bless the day I brought you the news that you are the sole heir to a fortune," he predicted. "And now that you have it,what will you do with it?"

"I —— have not the least idea," Marie faltered. "Can't you suggest something?"

"The money is mostly tied up in stocks and bonds," he told her. "They are very valuable and are easily negotiated."

She remained in silent thoughtfulness for some time.

"I know so little about such dealings," she confessed presently. "I really need someone I can trust to handle this money for me." Suddenly her face cleared and shone as a suggestion came to her. "You, dear Mr. Shields, are the very man I need. Will you accept the commission of —— "

"Well—well," the old man laughed. "I just expected you to say that."

"Will you do it?" Marie's eyes danced.

Mr. Shields nodded.

"Yes, I will handle your fortune for you," he acquiesced. "And you may rest assured that I will handle

it to the best of my ability.'

"You can name your own salary," cried Marie, "no matter what it is, I'll pay it."

The lawyer shook his head.

"Not a single penny will I take from you, my dear girl," he declared stoutly. "I shall be only too glad to do this little favor for the daughter of an old friend such as your father was to me."

"I —— I don't know how to thank you,dear Mr. Shields," she murmured.

"You can thank me by remaining true to yourself," he said. "You are playing a difficult and a painful role. I would not add one ounce to the heavy load you are already carrying."

With an impulsive motion Marie took the old lawyer's face between her hands and kissed him on the lips. He blushed like a bashful boy.

"By the way," he cried, pushing her away with utmost gentleness, "the settling of your uncle's estate will necessitate a trip to Australia. That suits me just right. I have been wanting a trip like that for quite a while."

"Well, now is your chance," she smiled. —

"And I shall take it," came back quickly. "I am going to start for Australia to-morrow. I'll write to you as soon as I reach Melbourne."

"Yes, but for heaven's sake be sure to address all letters to Miss Marie Desmond," she told him with a note of anxiety in her voice. "The world must never know that I am Philip Gordon's first wife. You'll keep my secret, won't you?"

He nodded vigorously.

"I shall be as silent as the grave until you give me leave to speak," he answered. "However, something tells me that you'll go back to your original name before

very long."

Marie gave him a startled glance.

"What —— what do you mean?"

"It is not right that you should masquerade under an assumed name and that you should remain nothing but a stranger to your own children," he replied. "Right always triumphes over wrong in the end. I have never known it to fail."

"God speed the day," the unhappy woman breathed with a sigh that came from the bottom of her heart.

## Chapter 97

## "BRING HER BACK!"

CONDITIONS at the Gordon mansion had not undergone much of a change. Bob Harding, now a member of the household, seemed to fit in quite well. Philip Gordon had taken an instant liking to this splendid young fellow, who by marriage was his brother-in-law.

The fact that he was of plebian origin made not the least difference. Gordon was one of the few rich men broad enough and charitable enough to look under the surface before passing judgement.

It did not take Gordon long to come to the conclusion that the young automobile mechanic had a heart of pure gold.

While the latter's sometimes crude expressions caused a smile, his manliness, his rugged honesty, and obvious desire to win the good will and respect of those with whom he came in personal contact, overshadowed that by far.

Old John Procter, his father-in-law, had taken him under his wing. During the short time of their acquaintance he had learned to love the boy.

More and more the old gentleman realized what a fool he had been to cast off Betty for having married Harding.

Oak Manor could scarcely be called the home of happiness. The master of the estate had become a quiet, taciturn sort of a man, weighed down by sorrow and bitter remorse.

In spite of every effort put forth and the large

sums of money spent, he could not find a trace of the woman he had wronged.

Often he wondered if Marie was still among the living. It did not seem possible that she could remain away from her children.

Ah, how she had loved them, and how they had clung to her!

She had always been an ideal mother and a model wife. Gordon was absolutely confident that she would have made at least an attemt to see the children, although her pride might have prevented her from appealing to him personally.

Not for a moment did he associate this lovely woman who called herself "Marie Desmond" with his fisrt wife.

And the strange part of that was, while others who had known Marie when she was still Mrs. Gordon, quickly saw a likeness in this governess, he absolutely remained blind to it.

The reason for this is hard to explain.

That she loved his children and treated them as her very own, he attributed to her sympathetic nature and the mother instinct in all women. She evidently possessed a more pronounced degree of it.

Private detectives in his employ succeeded in tracing his first wife's movements as far as Gary, Indiana, where she was employed in the home of the steel magnate as governess.

Here all trace was lost.

Whether she had really perished in the explosion, or took her own life afterward; or if she still lived in seclusion somewhere, could not be ascertained.

Philip Gordon brooded continually over the matter. The associations with his second wife were not of the nature to dispell gloom. As a matter of fact they

aggravated it.

Alice went on her way, seeking and finding enjoyment and pleasure wherever the opportunity offered. There were moments when she tried to be nice to Phil, but he remained cold.

John Procter, his age beginnig to tell on him heavily, was also the victim of the malady with which his son-in-law was afflicted.

But his remorse was the result of pride instead of unreasonable jealousy. He also suffered mental tortures because he had repudiated the one person he loved most.

The only difference between him and Philip Grodon was, that he firmly believed his Betty was alive and that she remained away because he had given her cause to fear his wrath.

Bob Harding's unexpected arrival served to quell his heartaches and brighten him up somewhat. This young man had youth and enthusiasm. He loved Betty dearly and was determined to move heaven and earth in order to find her.

To him the sorrowing father entrusted the task of bringing his "baby girl", as he fondly used to call her, back.

The young husband bent to the task with all the energy which characterized his every move. His father-in-law had placed an unlimited amount of money at his disposal.

"I don't care if you spend every dollar I own," was John Procter's frequent admonition, "but bring back my Betty to me."

Harding made a trip to Detroit and held a conference with the chief of police in that city.

His amazement was boundless when he learned that Betty had been arrested for the murder of Water-

ford Burley, the artist, in whose studio she was employed for some time.

But his horror turned to joy on being told that an Italian had confessed to the crime. Although innocent, Betty had been tried and convicted before the confession came. Her mind had given way, and she had escaped from the sanitarium.

"Is there any danger of my wife being rearrested if she is found?" Harding asked.

"None at all," the chief of police assured him. "In fact Mrs. Harding may collect damages from the state for false arrest and unjust prosecution. And in my opinion she is entitled to something.

"A grave error was made in her case and no one was more sorry than I when that Italian proved your wife's absolute innocence. I felt sorry for her, you understand."

Bob nodded and chewed his upper lip.

"I shall call at the sanitarium and make some inquiries there," he said, his voice quite firm.

"That is the thing to do," the other agreed. "Unfortunately the police never try to locate an innocent person, though a deeply wronged one. We go the limit to find a known criminal, however. You are now doing the work we should have done, young man. I wish you every success."

"Thanks," said Bob, and rose to go.

Two hours later found him at the sanitarium. He was treated with every consideration and courtesy as soon as he died and his identity and stated the purpose of his visit.

However, he learned little that was of any assistance to him. The head of the institution told him that Betty had made her escape from the garden where she was permitted to stroll alone. Nothing had been heard

of her after that.

Nothing daunted, the determined young husband visited the surrounding farms. At one of them he received a clue that seemed most encouraging..

Yes, a young woman of Betty's description had stopped there and asked for a drink of water. This had been given her. and she had inquired how she could reach the nearest railroad station.

In the course of a conversation she had said that she was headed for Chicago.

And now began a search that was heart-breaking.

There are thousands of places in a big city like Chicago where a fugitive from justice might hide without fear of capture.

Furnished rooms are rented everywhere in the city without asking a single question as long as the rent is paid promptly in advance.

No question is ever asked as to the moral character of a tenant. Such a thing is simply not done among the lower classes in Chicago. If the exorbitant rent, always payable in advance, is forthcoming, that is quite enough.

But Bob Harding's mind was sorely troubled.

Betty was a beautiful young woman. And a beautiful young woman alone in Chicago is beset with many dangers.

No one knew this better than he did.

He knew this from his own experience as well as from hearsay. Quite often he had read in the newspapers that a young girl suddenly disappeared without the least trace ever being found.

He knew very well that in certain districts vice stilll flourished and that the pretty young women confined in those houses do not all come there of their own free will.

Bob set his teeth as a horrible thought came to him.

What if his Betty had become the victim of the White Slavers?

He swore under his breath.

The thought was all the more horrible because Betty had written him that she was to become amother. And then another idea, but no less horrible, suggested itself to him.

What if his wife had brought a baby into the world and died from the effects of the ordeal?

His next move was to call at the city morgue.

Here he inquired with a quavering voice if a woman, describing Betty, had been brought there. He waited for the answer without breathing.

"No," the man in charge told him.

Harding left, but felt little relieved. His visit to the various hospitals was not productive of any satisfactory result. Everywhere he was informed that no young woman resembling Betty became a mother in these institutions.

Discouraged and almost disheartened, Bob reported to his father-in-law. Old John Procter listened with tears in his eyes.

"Are you ready to give up, my boy?" he asked as Harding finished.

"Not by long shot," the other cried.

"Well, I am glad to hear that, Bob."

"No, I am not through by a long shot," the latter reiterated.. "To-morrow I shall make the rounds in every rooming house district. It is only logical that Betty should find refuge in one of them. But what I can't understand is why she never wrote to you for help, sir. She surely must have done that."

"Well, she didn't," the other responded sadly. "So

far as I know not even the slightest message from Betty ever reached my house. "He paused a moment, his eyes hardening. "Of course, she might have written and I did——"

He did not finish the sentence. He was thinking of Alice, and he did not want this young son-in-law of his to know of what he thought his oldest daughter capable.

Way down in his own heart he had always felt that Alice was responsible for the estrangement between him and Betty.

And Alice was not above confiscating letters addressed to him, if these letters threatened her interest.

"I am glad you are not discouraged entirely," he said, patting Bob on the shoulder. "And," he added with a pathetic little smile, "something tells me that your efforts will be rewarded. Ah, won't it be a happy day when we have our Betty back again?"

"You bet it will, dad." Bob blushed as he used this intimate term for the first time. "You—you don't mind if I call you that, do you, sir?"

"Not at all, my boy," the old gentleman assured him. "That is exactly what I want you to call me. You are my son, and the fact that you are my Betty's husband makes you very dear to me."

Then their hands met in a long clasp.

Bob Harding's trip through the various rooming house districts was one of the most tedious, and at times, discouraging experiences of his life.

While most of the women he encountered were kind and sympathetic, there were others who snubbed him. A few openly resented the questions he asked and slammed the door in his face before he was half through.

He invaded the Northside first. For almost a week he searched without finding a trace of Betty.

Somehow he felt reluctant about going through the same routine on the Westside.

Weary of foot and almost ready to quit he walked along the streets. The section he found himself in one day was less desirable. The houses on both sides showed lack of care.

Frame dwellings were badly in need of paint. Old brick houses, with shutters hanging by one hinge, looked scarcely inviting. But in all the windows of them he saw the familiar sign "Furnished Rooms."

Suddenly he came upon a three story structure. There was a dark hallway which seemed to beckon to him.

No one seemed about as he entered. There was a door to the right on which he knocked. Presently a middle-aged, corpulent woman appeared. She gave Bob a quick smile.

"Are you looking for a furnished room?" she inquired before he could speak.

He shook his head.

The woman's smile vanished instantly and she seemed about to close the door. In other cases like this Bob Harding had gone away swearing under his breath. But he did nothing of the kind now. Something told him that this woman was worth interviewing.

"Wait a moment," he cried, reaching in his pocket for a roll of bills. "Give me a few minutes of your time, and I'll pay you for it."

"Oh, I have lots of time," she grinned. "What do you want?"

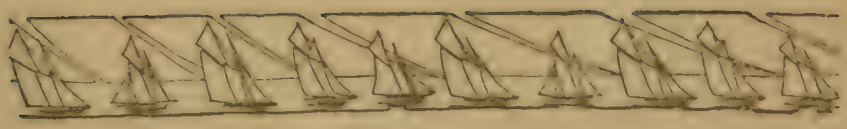
He at once began his quizz. But he did not have to ask the usual number of questions. When he began to describe Betty, the woman stopped him.

"Yes, I know her," she exclaimed. "She rented two furnished rooms from me on the third floor back.

Oh, I remember the poor thing very well," she chatted on. "She had a baby and it died."

Bob was almost overcome. He leaned against the door frame, his head swimming. When the woman saw the pallor on his face she took him by the arm and led him into the living room. Then she waddled away and came back with a glass of water.

"Here, drink this," she said not unkindly. "It will make you feel better."



## Chapter 98

## A SURPRISE

SO FAR Bob Harding's search had only brought him more heartaches and greater mental agony. Betty — his Betty, had lived in this dilapidated old tenement house on the third floor back and became a mother. Perhaps it was a good thing the baby died, for it would only have added to her already heavy burden.

And yet there was an element of joy in this discovery. It gave him reason to believe that she might have changed locations after the confinement.

She might even be living in the same neighborhood.

With this thought in mind he lifted his abstracted gaze and turned to the woman. His eyes were mutely pleading and a hundred questions trembled on his lips.

"Tell—tell me all you know about her," he begged.

"There is not much to tell," the woman answered. "She came here and asked for two furnished rooms. I happened to have two vacant at the time, and she took them."

"How did she—live?" Bob wanted to know. "Was she well supplied with money, or was she poor?"

"Oh, she had plently of ready cash," came back quickly, "and she paid generously for favors. But the rest of the people in the building did not like her. She was too exclusive. It seemed she didn't want any friends."

The young man nodded. Yes, that was so like Betty. She had always held herself aloof.

"Even when her baby came she asked for no help, although I knew that her funds were running low," the woman continued. "She sent one of the boys from the neighborhood to get the doctor, and——"

"Who was the doctor?" Harding interrupted anxiously.

"I think his name was Van Buren or something like that."

"Van Buren?" he repeated, searching the chambers of his memory.

Where had he heard that name before? For the moment he could not recall where and when the physician was mentioned.

"He was such a nice man," the woman went on, "he even brought his sister here to take care of the patient. I believe she wanted to adopt the baby, but it died and that was the end of it."

"Can you tell me where she went after she left here?" was Bob's next question.

"I don't know that," was the response. "She disappeared over night. I always thought that Dr. Van Buren took her with him, and I am still of that opinion although he denied it."

Further discussion of the matter disclosed nothing new. Harding gave the woman a five dollar bill and left.

The next thing was to find Dr. Van Buren. At the corner drugstore he got a hold of a telephone directory and began to scan its pages eagerly.

It was not difficult to locate the physician, for he was the only one of that name in Chicago.

Dr. Van Buren greeted the visitor with his usual kind smile. He was evidently not a prospective patient. Although a trifle pale, Bob Harding was in perfect physical health. His voice he asked for a private interview.

As soon as these two men were seated, Bob at once made known the object of his coming.

"The young woman you waited on in that tenement house was my wife," he declared. "You'll make me the happiest man on earth if you can help me find her doctor."

With a doubtful shake of his head the latter turned to the speaker.

"What became of her has always been a mystery to me," he replied. "Someone took her away from that tenement building in a closed car during the night. That much I learned. Further than that I know nothing."

Bob winced.

"Do—do you know who called for her?" he asked huskily. "Was it a man or a woman?"

"A woman, I believe."

The other breathed a sigh of relief.

He derived great comfort from this fact. Betty's unknown friend was a woman. In his heart he thanked God for that.

"Will you tell me why you and your wife became separated?" Dr. Van Buren inquired after a pause. "I tried to get that information from her, but all she would say was that the separation had been caused by circumstances over which neither of you had any control."

"That was true—partly," retorted Bob. "Please allow me to explain."

He told his story in a straight-forward manner. He admitted having been sent to prison and all the subsequent events.

But when he mentioned the fact that he was now staying at Oak Manor, that John Procter was his wife's father and that Philip Gordon was his brother-in-law by marriage, Dr. Van Buren gasped with incredulity.

"Why that seems almost unbelieveable!" he ex-

claimed. "Philip Gordon is one of my warmest personal friends, and I know Mr. Procter quite well. You see, I am the Gordon family physician."

And now the surprise was mutual.

"I am indeed very sorry that I can not give you the information that would lead you on the right track, my dear young man," Dr. Van Buren said sympathetically. "However I shall do all in my power to help you locate your wife."

Bob Harding expressed his gratitude, and then asked in a breath:

"Do you know of any reason why—why my wife should not be alive to-day?"

"I do not know of any such reason," the man of medicine declared with conviction. "Your wife was in the best of health when I saw her last. The fact that she had a mysterious benefactor in the woman who took her away leads me to believe that she still is well taken care of."

After some further discussion Bob Harding left the physician's office. He was treading on air.

Dr. Van Buren's confidence had inspired him. He could hardly wait until he reached Oak Manor so that he might tell Betty's father about his new and happy discoveries.

He found the old gentleman seated in the library, and after the usual warm exchange of greetings, he plunged at once into his story.

John Procter did not show excitement very easily, but as Bob finished he jumped to his feet, and the dull eyes under his bushy brows flashed with joy and hope.

"Thank God!" he cried, grasping his young son-in-law's hand and shaking it almost violently. "I believe now that our Betty is not lost to us. If, as Dr. Van Buren says, Betty was taken from that tenement house by

someone who meant to befriend her——"

"That's just it, dad," Harding interrupted, new doubt claiming him. "The person who took her away was a woman; but what kind of a woman?"

The other was about to speak when Bob stopped him with a quick gesture. He tip-toed to the door and jerked it open.

It was done so swiftly that the woman, whose attitude betrayed that she had been eavesdropping, scarcely found time to withdraw.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Gordon," he apologized. "I did not mean to be rude."

Alice summoned a smile and replied sweetly:

"You were not rude, Bob. I thank you for opening the door for me. How did you know I was coming into the library for a book?"

"I did not know it," he confessed. "While we were talking I heard someone moving about out here. I thought it might be one of the servants listening at the door to our conversation."

She passed into the room with a cheerful "Hello, Dad", to her father, then busied herself among the various bookcases.

From time to time she shot a furtive glance at Harding as the latter continued relating several incidents connected with his search for Betty.

The peculiar pallor in her cheeks seemed to indicate that she was far more interested in what she heard than either her father or Bob Harding suspected. Occasionally a sudden fire smoldered in her eyes.

She selected a book finally and left the library with a few murmured words.

For a moment she hesitated in the hall outside.

Once more she put her ear against the panel of the door and listened, but the two men were no longer talk-

ing about Betty.

There was an ugly look on her face as she went in search of her confidential maid, Nora Evans.

In the meantime John Procter was discussing a different topic with his young son-in-law.

Since he had accepted the latter into the family fold, he intended to give him what he seemed to need—a thorough business education. But the offer he made was rejected by Bob.

"It is very kind of you to want to do that, dad," Harding said as his father-in-law finished speaking. "But I would rather travel on my own hook. I could not accept a single dollar of your money and still retain my self-respect."

John Procter bristled.

"I am not asking you to take any of my money," he returned tartly. "I only suggested paying your tuition for a college term and——"

"Thank you very much for your kindness," the young man broke in with a smile. "Now please, listen to me for a moment. I am not the kind of a man to take advantage of good nature.

"The fact that I married your daughter does not entitle me to any of your wealth. I know I am not fit to be Betty's husband. She is so far above me.

"What I lack in education and manners can be acquired by taking a term or two at the night school. I expect to work during the day and make enough money to defray my own expenses. I know Betty would like it better that way. Why, I'd lose her respect if I——"

"Alright—alright," the old gentleman cut in. His voice sounded harsh and he seemed irritated when way down in his heart he was immensely pleased. "Have it your own way, you young fool."

As he uttered the last words he slapped Bob af-

ectionately on the back.

Again he was brought face to face with the realization that Betty made no mistake when she married this young automobile mechanic.

He had pride, he had character and he had ambition. Yes, he had indeed reasons to be proud of his son-in-law.

"You see," Bob Harding went on, "I am not exactly a poor man. I had saved quite a bit of money before I married Betty. Then I was given five hundred dollars by neighbors and friends of the woman whose child I saved from that fire. That will give me a nice start.

"As soon as Betty is found, I expect to go into business. I am anxious to handle a good make of automobiles and start a repair shop in connection with it.

"You know, dad, there is money to be made in the automobile repair business. I know the game thoroughly. Of course, I may not have enough capital to pay for the first assignment of cars, but my credit is good. I am sure——"

"What make of cars do you expect to sell?" Procter wanted to know.

"Either the Franklin or the Dodge," Bob answered. "They are both good and reliable machines."

"I suppose your darned independence would forbid you to let me buy the first car from you," the old gentleman laughed. "And you would not allow me to become a stockholder in your business either."

"You are wrong there, dad," was the quick rejoinder. "I should welcome you as a prospective purchaser. That is business. And so far as buying any stock in my concern, that also is business, providing you are willing to be a silent partner."

And then both men laughed, for the moment for-

getting that neither of them could be happy again unless Betty was found.

"Of course, I'll be a silent partner," Mr. Procter said, again serious. "I am too old a man to take an active part in any business enterprise. How much money will you let me invest, Bob?"

The latter shook his head.

"We will not discuss that now, dad," he answered. "First we must find Betty. After that we'll talk business."

And that ended the argument.

Chapter 99

## THE OUTLAW.

IT IS NOT an easy thing to cure a person afflicted with jealousy. When Ruth Gordon married Guy Fillmore she thought she knew every one of his faults. He was an extravagant young scamp who made big money easy and believed in spending it.

His summers were spent either at one of the exclusive Maine resorts or in the Canadian woods hunting and fishing. He always owned an expensive automobile and usually traveled in it all over the country.

He enjoyed good things to eat and amusement in its various forms.

His character was above reproach, and if his lovely young wife had been of a fault-finding disposition, extravagance was about the only shortcoming she could charge him with.

She thought that Guy had been cured of jealousy in that New York apartment hotel when he listened to the tragic story toldl by an oldl man of experience. But every now and then he showed this inherent weakness.

Ruth was glad when her husband suggested taking a trip to the Canadian woods. She loved the outdoors and camping particularly.

To be utterly alone with Guy for a month was something she had often dreamed of. And when it came to pass, she was completely happy.

They had found a spot to their liking and settled down to an indefinite stay.

**Continued in next number**

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